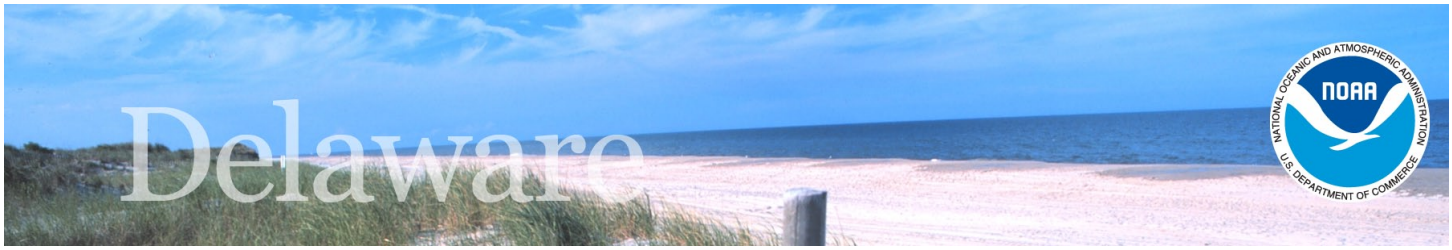


As a steward of our nation's coastal and marine environments, NOAA addresses immediate and long-term environmental threats through its Office of Response and Re1storation (OR&R). Scientists are on call around-the-clock to provide the U.S. Coast Guard and other emergency responders with critical information to help minimize environmental damage caused by oil and hazardous chemical spills. Environmental experts assess ecosystems compromised by historic or ongoing contamination and work with other organizations to conduct remediation, restoration, and monitoring of critical natural resources.

Protecting and Restoring Delaware's Coastal and Marine Areas

NOAA trust resources in Delaware include freshwater wetlands, salt marshes, historically important rivers, and both recreational and commercial fisheries. These resources are threatened by elevated levels of contaminants in the waterways that limit safe harvesting and consumption of fish and shellfish. Ship and barge traffic to ports in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey may result in oil spills that threaten trust resources. The state map on the reverse page shows key response and restoration activities in the past year.

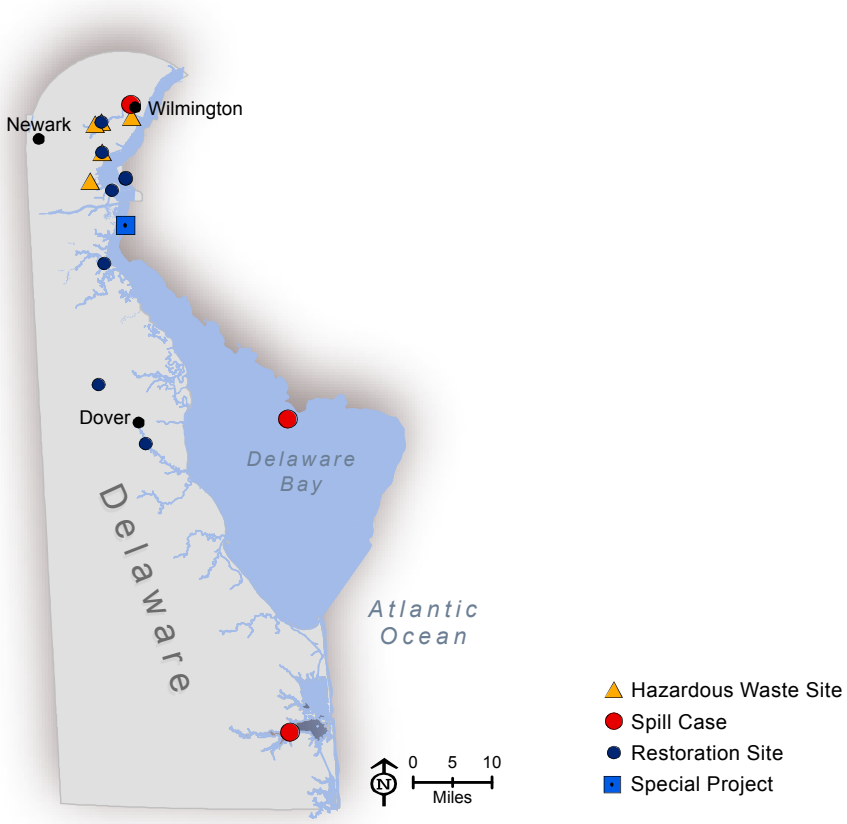
Emergency Response

On November 26, 2004, the *Athos I*, a 750-foot tanker (left), struck a large submerged anchor while preparing to dock at a refinery on the Delaware River and spilled more than 265,000 gallons of oil. Over 115 miles of the river (280 miles of shoreline) and six tributaries were oiled, with resulting harm to fish, shellfish, birds, and other wildlife that use the Delaware River and Bay. NOAA provided immediate scientific support to the U.S. Coast Guard through hazard and shoreline assessments, information on oil behavior and movement, cleanup recommendations, risk communication, and public outreach. NOAA biologists, toxicologists, and economists continue to collect data to determine the full damage to natural resources and services. NOAA and partner resource trustees will develop a plan describing the injured resources and services and the types of restoration projects to address them.

Assessment and Restoration

Years of pigment manufacturing activities at the E.I. DuPont facility in Newport contaminated river and bay habitats with chlorinated solvents and toxic heavy metals, including lead, cadmium, zinc, barium, mercury, and copper. NOAA worked with other natural resource trustees to evaluate ecological risk, implement cleanup projects, and monitor remedial action at the facility and two associated landfills. In addition, 56 acres along the Delaware Bay were acquired for restoration projects that will result in significant habitat improvements in the Mispillion River ecosystem, which is home to blue crab, Atlantic herring, spot, and striped bass.

DuPont Newport Superfund Site



Research

NOAA collaborates with other federal, state, and local programs to develop innovative approaches to protecting marine and estuarine environments through research and synthesis of information. The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) brings together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment, and restoration.

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment

For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at response.restoration.noaa.gov

Banner photo courtesy of Mr. William Folsom, NOAA, NMFS